

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4178

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 0342

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJECT: ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS OF SITUATION RESULTING FROM CABINET
CHANGES

REF: BUENOS AIRES 0314

1. OVER THE WEEKEND IT BECAME EVEN MORE CLEAR THAT LABOR SECTOR IS VERY DISTURBED BY LAST WEEK'S CABINET CHANGES (SEE REFTEL). THEY APPARENTLY ARE INTERPRETING CHANGES AS REFLECTING IF NOT A REEMERGENCE OF LOPEZREGUISMO THEN AT LEAST AN INCREASE OF POWER FOR SEVERAL FIGURES ASSOCIATED WITH LOPEZ REGA, SUCH AS RAUL LASTIRI (LOPEZ REGA'S SON-IN-LAW), JULIO GONZALEZ AND, SUPRISINGLY, ALBERTO VIGNES, THE EX-FOREIGN MIN. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT JUST PRIOR TO LOPEZ REGA'S FALL, VIGNES HAD BECOME ONE OF THE LEADING LOPEZREGUISTAS IN THE CABINET, AND WAS SAID TO BE BACKED PRINCIPALLY BY RAUL LASTIRI. VIGNES' REAPPEARANCE AS ONE OF MRS. PERON'S ADVISORS HAS ACCOMPANIED THAT OF LASTIRI AND ADDS TO LABOR'S CONCERN.

2. IN AN ILLUSTRATION OF HOW QUICKLY SHIFTING AND BYZANTINE THE POLITICAL LINES HAVE BECOME IN ARGENTINA, THE LABOR SECTOR, WHICH ONLY A FEW DAYS BEFORE HAD BEEN CALLING FOR ROBLEDO'S OUSTER, ON FRIDAY NIGHT (JAN 16) PLAYED THE KEY ROLE IN CHANGING HIS RESIGNATION AS FIRST VICE PRESIDENT OF THE PERONIST PARTY TO A SIMPLE LEAVE OF ABSENCE

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FOR REASONS OF HEALTH. AT LEAST IN THE SHORT RUN

THE EFFECT IS PROBABLY THE SAME: ROBLEDO WILL NOT BE RUNNING THE PERONIST PARTY. THE LABOR SECTOR DID NOT WANT TO SEE HIS RESIGNATION ACCEPTED, HOWEVER, BECAUSE THEY FEARED THAT MIGHT OPEN THE WAY TO RAUL LASTIRI, EITHER TO TAKE THE FIRST VICE PRESIDENCY FOR HIMSELF OR TO HAVE MRS. PERON APPOINT ONE OF HIS CRONIES. AS IT IS, WITH ROBLEDO ON SICK LEAVE, JOSE BAEZ, THE SECOND VICE PRESIDENT, BECOMES THE SENIOR OFFICER IN THE PARTY BELOW MRS. PERON HERSELF. BAEZ OF COURSE REPRESENTS THE LABOR SECTOR.

3. GIVEN THE INCREASINGLY PUBLIC DIFFERENCE OF OPINION BETWEEN MRS. PERON AND THE LABOR SECTOR OVER HER CABINET CHANGES, NEW RUMORS INEVITABLY HAVE SPRUNG UP CONCERNING THE POSSIBLE REPLACEMENT OF MIN OF ECONOMY, CAFIERO, AND MIN OF LABOR, RUCKAUF, BOTH OF WHOM ARE IDENTIFIED WITH THE LABOR SECTOR.

4. AS ONE NEWSPAPER SUMMED IT UP OVER THE WEEKEND, LABOR LEADERS MUST HAVE THE FEELING THAT THEY HAVE BEEN TAKEN BACK IN TIME TO THE JUNE-JULY CRISIS, EXCEPT THAT THIS TIME THEY FACE LASTIRI RATHER THAN LOPEZ REGA HIMSELF. (SEPTTEL FOLLOWS WITH MORE DETAILED DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF LABOR REACTION).
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